

solicit further thoughts from the correspondents of the Journal in relation to the important subject which I have feebly discussed.

Roxbury, Mass., October, 1851.

AMPUTATION OF THE FORE-ARM.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

MR. THOMAS CLARK, aged 35, while attempting, on Tuesday last, to disengage a leather belt from a wheel shaft that was rotating rapidly, was caught by the hand in it, drawn up to the location of the shaft (about one foot below the ceiling) and the arm was twisted around it, causing a simple fracture of the humerus, and a compound and comminuted one in the fore-arm about equidistant from the wrist and elbow. At the fore-arm fracture the soft parts were lacerated and torn, and muscular and *tendinous* portions of the palmaris longus and flexor carpi ulnaris muscles drawn out to the length of six inches from the point of fracture. Considering the fracture above, and upon examination finding considerable comminution, I resolved to amputate, which was done about four inches below the elbow-joint. The patient has been doing well since, and every indication promises a speedy recovery.

Medford, Mass., Oct. 11th, 1851.

MILTON FULLER, M.D.

NICOTIAN GEOPONICS.

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IN 1781, there appeared in Rome a quarto volume, written by a Jesuit monk by the name of Joseph Rodrigues de Mello, entitled *De Rusticis Brasiliæ Rebus Carminum, Libri iv.* These poems were composed while De Mello was an inhabitant of the Portuguese Colony of Brazil, and are consequently American productions, though first published in Italy. They are written in Latin hexameter verse, in imitation of the *Georgics* of Virgil, and the *Præmium Rusticum* of Father Varicère, though not, of course, so elegant as the work of the Roman poet, nor indeed as that of the French Jesuit. It is a collection of geoponic poems, and a pioneer of its class on this continent. From the work we gather that the author, though born in Oporto, might almost be considered a native of Brazil, having been carried to that country when very young. It only falls within the compass of this article to consider the poem upon tobacco, though that upon manioc—*de Culturâ Radicis Brasiliæ*, and upon the management of cattle—“*de Curâ Bœum in Brasiliâ*, are well worthy of notice. The book is very rare and of much excellence, but has been allowed to go out of print, and has never been translated into any of the modern languages. I propose, therefore, as a medical curiosity, to exhibit some specimens of the work which relate to a well-known article of the *materia medica*. The third poem of the collection is entitled *De Culturâ Herbae Nicotianæ in Brasiliâ*,

occupying pp. 151—169 inclusive. The author treats of the tobacco-plant as it is found in Brazil, and as respects versification and resemblance to the classics, in points of style and correct Latinity, it is quite equal to the once celebrated *Hymnus Tabaci* of Thorius. True it is, there are many new terms and many unclassical words—many expressions

"That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp,"*

but it must be recollected that De Mello was describing what was unknown to the Romans, and therefore this could not be otherwise. He commences the poem, *De Culturâ Herbae Nicotianæ*, by considering the growth and cultivation of tobacco, its preparation, manufacture and commerce, and then describes its uses as a luxury in a style of agreeable pleasantry and humor well fitting his theme, and not at all in the vein of one who was himself an enemy of the weed, but still far behind the eulogies of Isaac Hawkins Browne and Raphael Florius. The structure and Latinity of his verse may be seen in the following extracts, commencing at the beginning of the poem:—

"Nunc mihi, Nicotii de nomine dicta, supremus

*Herba labor sit. Phoebe Pater, castæque Sorores
Animis inceptis, nec non plantaria mecum
Inspicite, et, quæ conveniat cultura, docete,
Quo curanda modo folia, et quo denique pacto
Torquenda in funem; unde potens conflatur ad
usum*

*Purgandi cerebri pulvis; qui nunc dabit idem
Vati materiem cantus, idemque canendo
Sufficiet vires: nobis nam, pulvere sumpto,
Vena salit, veniuntque elacres ad carmina Mu-
sse.*

"Maxima qua spectat Thetiden America, re-
fusam

*Ad boreale latus, stat, nomine dicta Tabacum,
Insula in Oceano magno, regnata Britanniæ.
Ilic, nunc usu vulgaratam, repperit herbam
Nicotius primum, atque alias inde orbis in oras
Invexit: quare peregrinam et Brasiliæ tellus
Acceptit, sed ut indigenam complexa benigno est
Alma sint; nec planta solum felicis ullum
Usquam alibi sibi nacte fuit, quam rura feracis
Brasilie. Sed non glebam tamen illius omnem
Æque amat: in primis pigræ vicina paludi
Stare horret, foliisque statim subpellida, morbo
Languescit. Nec rura nimis sibi pinguis poscit;
Sed nec agros senio effectos, ubi nulla virescent
Arbusta, et raro vestit se gramine tellus.
Præterea," &c.*

The foregoing will suffice to give a general idea of De Mello's command of the Latin language, and of his powers as a bucolic poet. His productions well merit a skilful poetical translator, and, thus rendered, would afford both entertainment and instruction. Although *verses* may be considered out of place in a standard Medical Journal, yet as the curious poem here introduced relates to a powerful therapeutical agent, and one interesting from its almost *universal* consumption, I am induced to present an English version of my own, of Part I. of this rare American Latin georgic. The poetical defects of my translation I would charge in part to the nature of the subject, for however well the dignity of the Latin tongue will ennoble humble things, yet caterpillars, compost, grubs, and the like, do not so easily accommodate themselves to the fetters of English metre and rhyme. The methods of preparing the soil, and cultivating and manufacturing tobacco in Brazil, during the time of De Mello, naturally lead us to contrast them with those used in the United States, and more particularly in those towns in Massachusetts where such a crop is raised.

Fain would I sing Jean Nicot's herb divine:
Aid, Father Phœbus, and ye tuneful Nine!
All you chaste Sisters animate my strain,

Nor let me ask for melody in vain:
Teach me to tell Tobacco's wond'rous power,
And on my numbers all your graces shower:

Teach what the culture that the plant receives,
And what the mode to dry and cure the leaves ;
How these are twisted into ropes by art,
Which in their turn the magic snuff impart—
A powder powerful to purge the brain,
And furnish matter for the poet's strain,
Which will suffice to fill his soul with fire,
And burning thoughts and flowing words inspire !

We, when we take it, feel our genius rise,
And our invention's fed with rich supplies ;
Fancy our vigil sweetens and prolongs,
And mettlesome, the Moses come with songs.

A region owning sea-girt Albion's sway,
Far in the Western Ocean hid away,
First held the herb, though then unknown to fame,
Which every people now TOBACCO name.
Nicot was first the treasure to produce ;
From him has grown its universal use.
Brazil gave welcome to a plant so blest,
That seem'd created for her fruitful breast,
More than all herbs repaying care and toil,
And more than all adapted to her soil :
Still not to every glebe does it incline,
For marshy lands will make it droop and pine,
Struck with disease the plant no vigor knows,
But pale and sickly, languishingly grows.
Nor better will it lands too rich endure,
Or thrive in soils impoverish'd and poor—
Soils without strength to bloom with graceful
trees,

Or spread green herbage to the healthful breeze.
Nor does it like new lands all black with smoke,
Rough with burn'd trees and to no culture broke ;
For soil which ne'er to tillage yielded fruit,
Is much too wild the gentler plants to suit.
Tobacco loves a black and sandy ground,
Which, loose and dry, fit for the herb is found.
With rich manure first saturate your land,
Or better, mix the compost well with sand ;
Then with this mixture cover o'er your field,
And for your care, its bounteous crops will yield.
Thus first the glebe with judgment you select,
And then with fences firm the tract protect ;
Lest when at night you lose yourself in sleep,
Mischievous cattle evil vigils keep,
Tread down your herbs with desolating feet,
And make ere morn the havoc most complete.
When thus your plot is safely closed around,
Next with a harrow tear up all the ground,
Then furrows dig, the rows one foot apart,
That ample space the plants may have to start—
Room for the roots to ramify below—
Room for the stalks to rise and thrive and grow ;
And that no harm may to your crops ensue,
From neighboring herbage keep them well se-
cure.

Thus if the tiny seeds in beds you sow,
Soon will they germinate and finely grow,
The tender leaves will to the surface spring,
And passing time will strength and volume bring.
Then with fresh labor, and sagacious toil,
With care transplant them from their natal soil,
In other furrows let the roots be fix'd,
Where, with the earth, rich compost has been
mix'd ;

Then, in due season, view, with joy elate,
Both stems and leaves brought to a ripen'd state.

Yet, when the fruitful fields with plants are
green,

See that no worms upon the shoots are seen,
No caterpillars in a murd'rous train,
No long-legg'd locusts, grubs, or other bane.

But the eruca is the greatest pest
Of all the vermin which the herbs infest :
This little foe with teeth destructive kills,
And venom o'er the mangled plants distils ;
Squalid they languish, flaccid, wan, and pale,
And with no strength, from weakness pine and
fail.

Gnats, dreadful scourges, although small in size,
Attack the crops and make the herbs their prize :
In serried bodies, thick and black they fly,
And plants, on which they freely settle, die ;
The herbs' rich juice they suck with slender bills,
A theft which wastes, emaciates, and kills ;
The leaves are pierc'd by many a greedy gnat ;
The plants grow poor to make these vermin fat.
From woes like these, that threat the fertile field,
The farmer tries his growing crops to shield ;
He burns unpleasant odors o'er his land,
And scatters these perfumes on every hand.
All acrid fumes the tribe of gnats provoke,
And the eruca flies away from smoke.
About the plants no growing trees should spring,
Lest pests and gnats they to the crops should
bring ;

Lest mid the leaves may hide the insect curse,
Whence o'er the fields in myriads they disperse.
Shrubs, undestroyed, will vex you more and
more,

And thick and tangled spread your acres o'er,
Stealing the juice which suits your herbs the
best,

On which the hopes and vows of planters rest.

When age and growth to crop the plants ad-
vise,

They are inspected by the master's eyes ;
To derogue this task he does not dare,
Or rashly trust it to a servant's care :
Lest servile help should bring his fields to waste,
And leaves unripe cut with unthinking haste.
The planter, now, in person goes around,
And carefully inspects his entire ground ;
He seeks those leaves, which, languishing and
pale,

Need the excision of the trenchant nail,
And those which green, and yet unfit to cure,
Bid fair to be more healthy and mature ;
Observingly their color he desires,
And with exploring hand their vigor tries.
Whene'er he feels the leaves with villi rough,
This shows as yet they are not ripe enough ;
But when grown smooth, they no such prickles
wear,

Then is the time — for harvest then prepare !
Throughout the leafy lands the servants speed,
And all with ardor in the work proceed.
A part to crop the leaves their business find,
Which others into fitting bundles bind ;
These on their shoulders others bear away,
And to capacious roofs their loads convey.
Both leaves and branches from the stems they
tear,

Though for a second crop one bud they spare ;
To this the lower root its juice supplies,
And soon about it fruitful leaves arise,
Leaves better than the first in real worth,
And better nourish'd by the mellow earth ;
For to the first the soil was rough and rude,
But to the second show'd a milder mood ;
To the first crop unwilling bounty show'd,
But on the second all its power bestow'd.
Hence, with such partial favors freely blest,
The second growth of leaves becomes the best.
Such rates of gain no third crop can bestow,

For still a third time will the rich leaves grow :
 So she, who young, a numerous offspring bore,
 Grown old, has vigor to bring forth no more.
 Now, therefore, spare the treble-bearing herb,
 Nor let the nail its leaves or buds disturb.
 The little shrub, permitted thus to rise,
 Exulting points its branches to the skies ;
 Freed from the cruel planter's spoiling hand,
 Its leaves enlarge, and numerous buds expand ;
 Like a tall man it towers above the ground,
 And joyfully is with rich blossoms crown'd.
 Proudly at length it puts forth snowy flowers,
 And stands array'd in beauty's gaudy powers.
 Short is the time to bloom with such display ;
 Soon, by the winds, the flowers are blown away,
 No more their hues give pleasure to the sight,
 But all the ground is with the petals white.
 While from the stalks the blossoms thus are
 swept,
 Safe in their purple cups the seeds are kept ;
 These ripen'd, furnish a sufficient store,
 Which sown, spring up, and yield the planter
 more.
 The gather'd leaves, housed safely from the
 rain,
 Afford a labor unalloy'd with pain.
 The ample barns have each a straw-thatch'd
 roof,
 And sylvan walls of twigs, in twisted woof :
 These roofs above are by strong stakes confin'd,
 While underneath no doors preclude the wind ;
 But zephyrs blowing mild, and Boreas rude,
 Throughout the structure, as they list, intrude.
 Stout transverse poles the plants suspended bear,
 Which yield their juices to the flowing air.
 The moisture by degrees is dried away,

And then the leaves their vivid powers display.
 The herbs once dry, remove those poor and pale,
 And stem the others with a dexterous nail ;
 These in smooth piles, the stems thus torn away,
 As wives their napkins, in due order lay.
 This done, the heaps with careful hand oft turn,
 Lest, left unmoved, with too much heat they
 burn ;
 Lest putrefaction cause a fearful waste,
 And all the leaves to speedy ruin haste.
 This process o'er, toils of more worth begin,
 So be attentive to the truths I sing,
 Whilst I the mode to twist the leaves rehearse,
 And how to twine the rope detail in verse.
 Firm in the ground the bi-horn'd forks are fix'd,
 Their prongs apart, a transverse beam betwixt.
 This beam the rope embraces at one end ;
 The other makes it in the ridges bend.
 At first some leaves are by the fingers twin'd,
 And firmly to the rolling beam confin'd ;
 In this the embryo of the work consists,
 And thus begun, his rope the workman twists.
 These from the ridges he with skill unbinds,
 And round the cylinder in order winds ;
 With added leaves he swells the twisted pile,
 The beam kept rolling by a boy the while.
 Another slave attentive hands the leaves,
 Another still, behind, the coil receives.
 The twisted length should not three ells exceed,
 That all the hands in union may proceed ;
 The leaves, thus long when in a rope combin'd,
 Coiling, should round the cylinder be twin'd,
 As girls, who spin, draw out a flaxen thread,
 And wind it round their spindles, near the head.
 This done, again resume your toil with skill,
 Till with the coils the cylinder you fill.

MIDWIFERY STATISTICS.

[FROM a bibliographical notice, in the Dublin Quarterly Journal, of a work on Midwifery lately published in London, we copy the following interesting statistics. The work alluded to, contains reports of the midwifery practice of the late John Green Crosse, M.D., F.R.S., arranged and edited by Dr. Edward Copeman.]

"In the first part of the work, Dr. Copeman lays before us the general numerical results of Mr. Crosse's midwifery practice, whence it appears, that instruments were used 84 times out of the entire number of cases, amounting to 1377. This gives a proportion of one in 16 2-5, which under any circumstances must be considered high, but especially so in private practice. Let us compare this with the results of Dr. Joseph Clarke and Dr. Merriman. The latter had recourse to instruments once only in 98 cases ; and the former physician, in his private practice, employed them in the proportion of 1 out of 295 deliveries ; and yet the mortality among his patients (in number 3847) was only 1 in 174, whilst in Mr. Crosse's statistics it is 1 in 98 1-3. That he resorted to instrumental aid more frequently than he should have done, was a reflection that seemed to have occurred to Mr. Crosse's own mind towards the close of his career, for we find the following candid and judicious observations attributed to him :—'I commenced practice with a most formidable notion of the difficulties and responsibility of practising midwifery,